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AUTHOR Gibbs, Foster B.
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ABSTRACT

A comprehensive assessment of the career education programs offered in the school districts in Michigan was conducted, based on the assumption that the lack of systematically organized needs data for appropriate decisionmaking groups may be an obstruction to the statewide implementation of career education. A questionnaire instrument was structured to collect data that would serve decisions to be made by appropriate audiences such as local school districts, career education planning districts, the Michigan Department of Education, and the State Legislature. As a result of the data analysis which included an examination of the developmental steps in the implementation of the career development components, it was generally concluded that between 20%-33% of the State's school districts are implementing the major steps of the Michigan Accountability Model in conjunction with career education, which is in 30%-40% compliance with Public Act 97 (Career Education Act). In this report, a sampling of the study results is presented and discussed in terms of the major questions under investigation, which include (1) school district policy and procedure regarding career education, (2) administrative provision for career education, (3) staff development and training practices, (4) career development program implementation, and (5) support and assistance needs of local educational agencies. (TA)

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THE NATURE, STATUS, AND SCOPE OF CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

An Overview

by

Dr. Foster B. Gibbs

in cooperation with

Michigan Department of Education
Office of Career Education

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In the fall of 1976 a comprehensive assessment of the career education programs offered in the school districts in the State of Michigan was conducted. The purpose for this research was to provide a comprehensive description of current practice with regard to the implementation of the Michigan Career Education Infusion Model in the 530 kindergarten through grade twelve public school districts. The underlying rationale for the study was based on the assumption that the lack of systematically organized needs data in the hands of appropriate decision-making groups may be serving as an obstruction to the state-wide implementation of career education. The questionnaire instrument was structured to collect data that would serve decisions to be made by appropriate audiences such as local school districts, career education planning districts, the Michigan Department of Education, and the State Legislature.

The results were presented and discussed in terms of the major questions under investigation which include: (1) school district policy and procedure regarding career education; (2) administrative provision for career education; (3) staff development and training practices; (4) career development program implementation; and (5) support and assistance needs of local educational agencies. A sampling of the results of this study entitled, The Nature, Status, and Scope of Career Education Programs in the School Districts of the State of Michigan[1] follows.

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[1]Foster B. Gibbs, The Nature, Status, and Scope of Career Education Programs in the School Districts of the State of Michigan, 1977.

School District Policy and Procedure

- Eighty-six percent (86%) of the school districts have developed a philosophy or general goal statement that contains provision for career education.
- There is strong philosophical support that career education instruction is an important responsibility of the schools.
- Forty-five percent (45%) of the school districts reported that their boards of education have adopted formal, written policies regarding career education. Table 1 indicates the items most typically included within adopted career education policies.

TABLE 1

PROVISIONS CONTAINED WITHIN
CAREER EDUCATION POLICIES

Item	Number of Districts	Percent of Districts
A Plan for Organizing Career Education Activities	194	38%
A Plan for Staff Development	149	30%
A Plan for Delivering Career Education Services	146	29%
A Plan for Evaluating Career Education Activities	97	19%
A Budget	95	19%
Specific Student Outcome Objectives	93	18%

- Forty-four percent (44%) of the districts are implementing career education without provision of written policy, making a total of eighty-nine percent (89%) of Michigan School Districts implementing some aspects of career education.
- Needs assessment as a part of career education planning activities was conducted by thirty-four percent (34%) of the school districts.
- Sixty-four percent (64%) of the school districts reported that they have organized career education advisory committees.

Administrative Provision for Career Education

- Eighty-nine percent (89%) of the Michigan School Districts reported that they have appointed a person to direct and coordinate career education activities on a district-wide basis.
- Table 2 describes the characteristics and background of the individual named to this leadership role.

TABLE 2

BACKGROUND OF CAREER EDUCATION LEADERS

Background/Role Characteristics	Number of Districts	Percent of Districts
Career Education is a Part-Time Responsibility . .	400	79%
Background is Elementary or Secondary Education .	345	68%
Background is General Administration	218	43%
Background Includes Specific Career Education Training	169	34%
Background is General Curriculum Development . .	139	28%
Background is Guidance and Counseling	134	27%
Background is Vocational Education	120	24%
Background is Business/Labor/Industry	48	10%
Career Education is a Full-Time Responsibility . . .	12	2%

- Excluding funds for vocational education, funds were reported as being specifically allocated for career education by thirty-eight percent (38%) of the schools districts. The principle source of funds was local school revenue (83%). Other funding sources include federal career education funds, 13%; state funding assistance, 9%; other funding sources, 11%.
- The average allocation for each category was reported as under $10,000 across the districts.
- Fifty-five percent (55%) of the districts indicated that they encourage staff to conduct career education activities within existing budgets.

Staff Development and Training

- Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the school districts reported having conducted career education staff development and training activities.
- In Table 3, the primary purpose for conducting the inservice training is illustrated.

TABLE 3

PRIMARY PURPOSE FOR CONDUCTING CAREER EDUCATION INSERVICE TRAINING

Stated Purpose	Number of Districts	Percent of Districts
Career Education Awareness and Planning	299	59%
Career Education Program Implementation	123	24%
Career Education Teaching Techniques	79	16%
Career Education Curriculum Materials	69	14%
Career Guidance and Counseling Strategies	45	9%
Community Resources for Career Education . . .	32	6%
Career Education Evaluation Technique	19	4%

Career Development Program Implementation

- Career development as defined by the Michigan Model contains four major components: self-awareness and assessment, career awareness and exploration, career decision-making, and career planning and placement.
- The number and percent of districts offering instruction to more than half of their students in the various career development components are identified in Table 4.

TABLE 4

STUDENTS RECEIVING CAREER DEVELOPMENT INSTRUCTION

Career Development Component	Percent of Districts Offering Instruction to More Than Half of Their Students							
	Early Elementary		Later Elementary		Junior High/ Middle School		Senior High	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Self-Awareness and Assessment	248	52%	227	48%	183	39%	149	31%
Career Awareness and Exploration	171	36%	202	43%	211	44%	186	39%
Career Decision-Making	50	10%	65	14%	129	27%	182	39%
Career Planning and Placement	28	6%	31	6%	78	17%	180	39%

- A listing of instructional techniques, methods, and activities that describes the nature of the career education delivery system for career practices within the state is contained within Table 5.

TABLE 5

A DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT
CAREER EDUCATION DELIVERY SYSTEM

Techniques/Methods/Activities	Districts Currently Utilizing the Technique	
	Number	Percent
General Guidance and Counseling	411	87%
Infusion Within the Total Curriculum	360	76%
Field Trips	357	76%
Cooperative Training/Paid Work Experience	340	72%
Comprehensive Vocational-Technical Training	329	70%
Credit Toward Graduation for Work Experience	328	69%
Career Guidance and Counseling	311	66%
Job Readiness Skills Integrated With Vocational Education	297	63%
Career Education Units	293	62%
Business/Labor/Industry Guest Speakers	292	62%
Career Information Centers	229	49%
Student Placement Services	228	48%
On-The-Job Training	221	47%
Unpaid Work Experience	193	41%
Career Education Course(s)	167	35%
Group Career Counseling	165	35%
Work Observation Activities	154	33%
Simulated Work Experience	141	30%
Computer Assisted Instruction	62	13%

- Superintendents were asked to rate the importance of career education student outcomes taken from the Michigan Department of Education publication, A Reference Guide: Career Development Goals and Performance Indicators. Table 6 is a composite summary of the essential and very important ratings given by the Michigan superintendents.

TABLE 6

COMBINED RATINGS OF THE IMPORTANCE
OF CAREER EDUCATION STUDENT OUTCOMES

Career Education Student Outcome	Essential and Very Important %
Self-Worth and Respect for Others	95%
Basic Academic Skills for Adaptability and Change	91%
Employability Skills (work ethic, punctuality, hygiene)	85%
Personal Value Structure, Desire to Contribute to Society	87%
Decision-Making Skills Related to Occupational Choice	79%
Vaocational Skills for Entry Employment	73%
Successful Placement (job, technical training, college)	62%
Ability to Choose Work That Matches Desired Life Style	61%
Awareness of Need for Continued Educational Training	61%

- Twenty-six percent (26%) of the school districts reported that they conducted a formal evaluation of career education activities.
- The nature of the specific evaluation services performed by the school districts is contained in Table 7.

TABLE 7

CAREER EDUCATION EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

Evaluation Services	Rate of Inclusion of the Evaluation Activity		
	Number of Districts	Percent of Districts Conducting Evaluation N = 122	Percent of Total Districts
Follow-Up Study of Recent Graduates	85	70%	18%
Search of District Goals for Inclusion of Career Education	73	60%	16%
Search of Career Education Literature for New Developments	59	48%	13%
Career Education Needs Assessment	57	47%	12%
Monitoring Inservice Training for Career Education	51	42%	11%
Study of Administrative Commitment to Career Education	48	39%	10%
Study of Professional Staff Commitment to Career Education	48	39%	10%
Identification of Administrative Organization and Policy for Career Education	47	39%	10%
Analysis of Funding for Career Education	42	34%	9%
Report of Staffing Practices Regarding Career Education	34	28%	7%
Assess Community Support for Career Education	27	22%	6%
Assessment of Student Performance in Career Education	26	21%	6%

Support and Assistance Needs

- The data for this section of the study were collected to identify and prioritize the felt needs of the school districts regarding the type of support services and activities that the Michigan Department of Education should provide to assist in the implementation of career education.
- The results of the superintendents' intuitive perceptions of the future career education needs of their districts are reported in Table 8.

TABLE 8

PRIORITY RATINGS OF MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SUPPORT SERVICES

Career Education Support Service	Priority Rating								N
	1 High		2 Medium		3 Low		4 Not Needed		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Provide Funds to Implement and Operate Career Education Programs.	413	92%	20	4%	8	2%	8	2%	449
Develop Inservice Training Workshop Materials	259	56%	143	31%	43	9%	21	5%	466
Develop Career Education Instructional Materials . . .	252	54%	148	32%	47	10%	19	4%	466
Establish Dissemination System for Current Career Education Information.	248	54%	166	36%	30	7%	17	4%	461
Provide Career Guidance Training to Counseling Personnel	224	49%	165	36%	51	11%	21	5%	461
Provide Career Education Consultants to Local Educational Agencies	196	43%	148	32%	82	18%	35	8%	461
Conduct Research to Predict Future Job Market Trends.	194	42%	153	33%	79	17%	33	7%	459
Assist Local Educational Agencies in Establishing an Evaluation Capability.	174	38%	168	37%	87	19%	31	7%	460
Validation of Career Education Curriculum Materials	172	37%	189	41%	78	17%	25	5%	464
Assist Colleges and Universities in Career Education Pre-Training	166	36%	146	32%	110	24%	35	8%	457
Establish a Career Education Objectives Bank	149	32%	191	42%	85	8%	35	8%	460
Develop a Computerized Career Information Network .	103	23%	142	31%	150	33%	59	13%	454
Establish a Career Education Test Item Bank	98	18%	169	37%	147	32%	39	9%	453

Summary

In summary, it can be stated that the Michigan Legislature was forward thinking in their passage of Act 97 commonly referred to as the Career Education Act. It can further be concluded that the Michigan Department of Education has responded well to the legislative planning mandate, that a comprehensive, operationally viable model has been developed, and that a series of products have been prepared to disseminate the concepts, goals, and objectives of career education. Program guidelines, handbooks, and workshop packages have also been developed to assist local school districts in the planning and implementation of career education.

As a result of the analysis of the developmental steps in the implementation of the career development components, it can be stated that between one-fourth and one-third of the school districts of the state are implementing the major steps of the Michigan Accountability Model in conjunction with career education. Twenty-five to thirty percent (25% to 30%) of the districts reported that they have adopted career development sub-goals, identified student outcome objectives, conducted career education needs assessment activities, identified teaching strategies, provided staff training, and installed career education pilot program. The remaining steps in the Accountability Model (implementation of the delivery system on a district-wide basis, evaluation of career education programs, and reporting of results to appropriate audiences) have been accomplished by ten to fifteen percent (10% to 15%) of the school districts. School district compliance with Public Act 97 would appear to include the combination

of districts who are in the planning stage with those who have implemented the various elements of career education. In this sense compliance has been reached by thirty-five to forty percent (35% to 40%) of the school districts of the state at a time prior to the state level funding of career education.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made as a result of the findings and conclusions derived from this study of the nature, status, and scope of career education program implementation.

- The emphasis of the Michigan Department of Education should be switched from model project implementation to every district, statewide implementation.
- Funds should be appropriated to assist local educational agencies in the implementation and operation of career education programs.
- The level of funding should be based in part upon the comprehensiveness of the individual district plan as judged by the standards set by the fully implemented Michigan Career Education Infusion Model.
- A provision of the funding formula should be established to encourage local educational agencies to hire or appoint career education coordinators on a district-wide basis (example formula: 80% reimbursement in year one, 75% reimbursement in year two, 50% in year three, 25% in year four, and total local educational agency funding of the position thereafter).

- A state directed leadership training program should be required for career education coordinators as a condition of receiving the funding subsidy.
- A network of career education support staff who are fully knowledgeable and familiar with the Michigan Career Education planning documents and dissemination materials should be made available to assist local school districts in the implementation of career education programs.
- A state-wide, multi-media career education informational campaign should be run that is directed at the parent community to engender local support and demand for career education.
- Through the career education planning districts, the local educational agencies should receive assistance in offering inservice training to the general instructional staff regarding career education infusion.
- Exception language should be approved or a relaxation in the 180 day requirement should be made to allow, without added staff expenses, local school districts to require participation in State Department sponsored career education staff development and training activities.
- Local educational agencies should be given assistance in the establishment of an evaluation capability which may best be accomplished for the smaller districts through a cooperative arrangement, with the intermediate district structure serving as the delivery vehicle.
- Similar support and assistance should be given to the establishment of cooperative, regional student placement services.

- To improve cost effectiveness and reduce the duplication of effort in regard to career education curriculum development, a career education objectives pool and test item bank should be developed and disseminated.
- The Michigan Department of Education should continue its efforts with regard to the following current practices:
    (1) the development of inservice training workshop material;
    (2) the development of goals, objectives, and performance indicators;
    (3) career guidance training for general counseling personnel;
    (4) the Michigan Occupational Information System;
    (5) validation of programs and instructional models;
    (6) the university consortium to assist in staff pre-training and retraining.
- The Michigan Department of Education should continue the implementation of the Michigan Educational Assessment Program giving emphasis to the measurement of student attainment of life-role competencies.